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ELBERT C. FERGUSON—1856-1917.

The announcement of the death of Elbert C. Ferguson of Chicago will come as a shock to the entire membership of the Commercial Law League and the State Historical Society, as it did to the members of the League in Chicago, when on Saturday morning, June 9, 1917, they received word that he had passed away in a Chicago hospital, where he had been taken for an operation on the preceding day. No one but his immediate family and his office force knew even that he was ill, as he was attending to his work as usual on Thursday.

There are some men who die and are not missed by more than a few intimates. This man had qualities that brought him into close contact with thousands of business and professional men throughout the United States and Canada—nay, even in many foreign cities, and all will mourn his departure.

Mr. Ferguson's life was an intense one. He entered into all his undertakings in a serious way. He took even his recreations intensely. In his vacation travels abroad with Mrs. Ferguson he observed and studied and made notes and pictures so that these travels became a part of his very life. Many of his friends have spent delightful hours in his parlors viewing the scenes of his foreign travels shown on a curtain accompanied by a running description exceedingly informing and interesting. In his lighter moments, when off duty, he would match any story with a better one and he always had a full appreciation of the company and the occasion.

Mr. Ferguson's early life was one of hardship. For many years he literally fought for everything he obtained

and in making a just estimate of his character we must remember this. He had neither wealth nor education back of him. He began his professional career in Chicago at the very bottom of the ladder.

Mr. Ferguson's friendships were many and some of them were among men most prominent and successful in Chicago and other cities. The number and character of the men who attended his funeral on the busy weekday afternoon was a silent testimonial to his standing in the community. Some of his friendships were exceedingly intimate. He loved some of his friends with almost a woman's tenderness. Such was his intimacy with former President Weed of Cleveland.

He was vastly ambitious and always along right lines. He was interested in all movements for the uplift of men and no task given him in this direction was too hard. He gave liberally of his time, his energy and his money to schemes for social and municipal uplift. His voice was being constantly heard in Chicago and throughout his state for the betterment of things.

You could always know where Mr. Ferguson stood on any question. He was outspoken and candid, even to a point where he hurt himself. He did not count even personal friendship as anything where a question of principle entered. He could oppose a friend and oppose him bitterly if he thought that friend was wrong, but he always expected to keep the friend.

Mr. Ferguson's home life was beautiful. It is a matter of record that Mrs. Ferguson is the only woman ever made an honorary member of the Commercial Law League and she won this distinction by her splendid qualities that nowhere shone more brightly than in her home. The greatest stroke of success that E. C. Ferguson ever made was when on the 28th of June, 1893, he married Estella Gobel of Chicago. It has often been said of these two that they were fashioned for each other. Each was the complement of the other. Recently Mr. Ferguson finished a

home on Hyde Park boulevard at the corner of Woodlawn, in the heart of Chicago's most aristocratic section, but a few blocks from their old home so well known to many of their friends. The new home, wonderfully attractive in all its appointments, is surrounded with lawn and flowers in which both Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson delighted. Surrounded thus, with all to make life sweet, and with scarcely a warning, he passed out of this home on Monday afternoon, June 11th, never to enter it again.

If the abundance of the flowers that surrounded him at his departure is any mark of the esteem in which he was held, then surely no words can measure it. The entire home was literally buried in floral offerings. The flowers, the music, the scripture, the words of the preacher, were all tender and beautiful. It was all as Mr. Ferguson would have had it. He loved beautiful things.

Mr. Ferguson was deeply interested in the Commercial Law League of America. It was one of his hobbies. Anything to injure it was like a blow struck at himself. In the first Convention at Detroit in 1895 while that meeting was called to order by George S. Hull of Buffalo, the first man to address it was E. C. Ferguson of Chicago, who arose to nominate the presiding officer pro tem.

Long before that Convention came into being he worked to bring it about and when he saw that it was actually to take place he wrote his friends throughout the country and obtained from them money enough to buy a set of solid silver of 120 pieces to present to the organizer of the Convention, and he made the presentation speech at the close of the League's first banquet. From these days in 1895 to the very day of his death he followed every step of the League with intense solicitation. In 1901 he was elected President of the League and his year was marked by intense activity. It was a time of discouragement in League affairs. He got under the load and bore it with all the earnestness of his nature. There have been men who have worked spasmodically in behalf of the League; there

never was an hour in Mr. Ferguson's life that he was not willing to shoulder a burden for it. Offtimes he took upon himself cares in connection with it that were not his; such was his anxious solicitation for the good of the order.

Elbert Campbell Ferguson was born at College Hill, near Cincinnati, Ohio, May 1, 1856. At the age of eleven his parents moved into Illinois. In 1879 Mr. Ferguson located in Chicago and on May 27, 1880, was graduated from the Union College of Law. He began the practice of law in 1883, and was married to Miss Estella Gobel on June 28, 1893.

In 1889 Mr. Ferguson formed a partnership with Charles N. Goodnow under the firm name of Ferguson & Goodnow, Mr. Goodnow retired in 1906 on his election as judge.

Mr. Ferguson was one of the founders of the Commercial Law League of America, his certificate of membership being No. 110. He was its President in 1901-1902 and from time to time served on the Executive Committee and other committees.

Mr. Ferguson was a member of the Association of Commerce, the American Bar Association, Illinois State Bar Association, and Chicago Bar Association, the Illinois State Historical Society, Union League Club, Chicago Athletic Association, South Shore and Beverly Country Clubs, Chicago Paint and Varnish Club, Hesperia Lodge, A. F. & A. M., Oriental Consistory, St. Bernard Commandery and Medinah Temple.

The funeral was held from the residence. The services were conducted by the Rev. William R. Wedderspoon of St. James' Methodist Episcopal Church. The following were pallbearers:

Honorary: George E. Watson, B. E. Sunny, H. A. Wheeler, Charles E. Field, E. E. Maxwell, Dr. Frank T. Andrews, W. E. Bell, Charles F. Hills, L. M. Smith, Thad O. Bunch, Albert H. Harris, B. A. Conkling.

Active—E. L. Eames, E. I. England, W. E. Gibbs, J. E. McWilliams, George Tripp.

The following committee represented the Bar Association: Frederick A. Brown, Thaddeus O. Bunch, Albert N. Eastman, Ernest L. Kreamer, Frank I. Moulton, Merritt W. Pinckney, John T. Richards, James Rosenthal, Frederic P. Vose.

The Commercial Law League was represented at the funeral by the following appointed as a committee by President McGilton:

Wm. C. Sprague, Thaddeus O. Bunch, Frank I. Moulton, Frederic P. Vose, Albert N. Eastman, S. T. Bledsoe, John S. Ransom, E. E. Donnelly, Bloomington, Ill., Edward H. Brink, Cincinnati, Ohio.